

REPORT from

# CLOSER LOOK

A Project of the Parents' Campaign for  
Handicapped Children and Youth

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## *Nation's Communities Respond to Challenge of International Year of Disabled Persons*

### **The Invisible Barrier**

Closer Look has been in existence for 12 years. These have been years when important history has been made for disabled children and adults. When the project started, parents were begging for services for their handicapped children; there were no laws that accepted the premise that disabled people are equal members of society.

During this period, we've lived through a great change. A profound surge of awareness of the dignity and human rights of people with disabilities has stirred action on many levels. The blatant discrimination that existed for centuries has been challenged. Landmark legislation has translated this awareness into specific guarantees—for equal opportunity for education, employment, independent living. New opportunities have opened where doors were shut . . . for infants born with severe handicaps, for children who need individualized teaching, for disabled men and women seeking freedom to live and work in the community.

We've come a long way in the past twelve years. But there is still a long, hard way ahead. Thousands of letters come to Closer Look from every part of the country from parents, adults with disabilities and concerned professionals. They make us acutely conscious of the distance still to go.

### **Old stereotypes keep minds closed**

The barriers that face us are both visible and invisible. Probably no impediment is greater than the old stereotypes that still haunt disabled people. As a nation, we are just beginning to open up minds to a view of disabled people as people, with all kinds of personalities and abilities, individual aspirations, skills, strengths and weaknesses. The instinct to pity is hard to overcome, and pity inevitably suggests inferiority, sets the stage for condescension and exclusion.

We need to face honestly the deep-rooted attitudes in each of us that continue to assign disabled people a lower level of expectation in our society. In "The Unexpected Minority," John Gliedman and William Roth point to the  
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During 1981, this striking logo, symbolizing partnership between disabled and non-disabled people, is becoming familiar to millions of Americans. It represents the International Year of Disabled Persons, declared by the United Nations as a worldwide recognition of the needs and full



humanity of disabled persons. The UN Advisory Committee on IYDP has announced that the "chief aim of this plan is to propose concrete measures which could contribute to bringing about a radical change in the situation of disabled people in all aspects of living."

In our own country, projected activities come in an exciting variety. Education, awareness, recreation and leisure, architectural barriers, employment—all have been the focus of a range of innovative programs carried out by all types of communities. One community—Augusta, Georgia—is working to set up a respite care system for families with disabled members. A very different community is the Pacific Missile Test Center at Point Mugu, California, where an air show in October will feature pilots who are disabled. The community is also sponsoring a work experience program on base for young people who are severely visually handicapped.

### **Partnership is the key**

The key to the IYDP effort is partnership. As Gary Bass, Director of Liaison for the U.S. Council for IYDP, explains, the Council works with local, state and nationwide partners as colleagues. Council staff members assist communities in identifying short- and long-term goals and objectives in line with local needs. When this process is completed and  
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## UPDATE: Federal Assistance— Programs for Handicapped People

During the first three months of his administration, President Ronald Reagan and his advisors have presented many recommendations to the Congress, including proposals for budget and tax cuts and changes in the way some programs are funded. The concern over double-digit inflation, high unemployment and federal infringement on states' rights has prompted a debate on how the country can best achieve economic recovery, and at the same time serve the needs of all citizens in an equitable way.

Many of the changes suggested by the Administration relate to education programs and social services for handicapped people. *REPORT from CLOSER LOOK* is providing the following brief update for its readers, to help in understanding events now taking place in Washington.

### Changes for education programs

On April 28, 1981, the Reagan Administration transmitted to Congress the *Elementary and Secondary Education Consolidation Act of 1981*, a bill which would combine 44 existing education programs into two block grants, one to local education agencies (LEAs) and the other to state education agencies (SEAs). Under block grant legislation, specific programs would be grouped together, and federal funds would be granted to the "block," not to the individual programs as is the case with legislation currently in effect. If enacted without delay by Congress, this legislation would become effective during the 1982-83 school year.

This consolidation of programs would affect the administration, funding and approach to delivery of educational services. Block grants would give states and local governments more control, as well as greater flexibility, in making policy decision on how federal funds for education will be spent than is possible with more prescriptive legislation such as Public Law 94-142.

Funds allotted to an LEA under the proposed legislation may only be used to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived and handicapped children (especially the severely handicapped), and children in schools undergoing desegregation. The local educational agency would determine which needs to address with the funds and how to meet these needs. The funds in the SEA grant may only be used to support programs for handicapped, neglected and delinquent children in institutions, for migratory children and for adults lacking basic skills.

In his letter of transmittal to Congress, Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell commented on the proposed legislation:

"This bill would change the Federal approach to financial support of elementary and secondary education by shifting to States and local governments many of the responsibilities for education decisions and policy making that have been exercised by the Federal Government in recent years. States and local educational agencies are in the best position to make choices about how to meet educational needs addressed by the dozens of existing Federal elementary and secondary programs that would be consolidated under this measure....

The proposed legislation would permit States and localities to make the decisions, as they most appropriately can, as to how, when and where educational services should be provided, about priorities among needs, and about what services should be offered."

Congressional committees are expected to hold hearings which would examine the block grant funding approach as it relates to education. If enacted, the legislation would repeal Public Law 94-142 as well as other specific legislation related to education.

In mid-March the Administration proposed a 25% rescission (a rescission cancels a previously approved level of funding) effective for school year 1981-82 for all of the programs to be included in the proposed education block grants, as well as for vocational and bilingual education programs (which are not included in block grant proposals). Congress is now deliberating these proposed rescissions and is scheduled to take action on these and other budget issues in mid-May.

### Changes in related programs

Proposed legislation for a health services block grant, which includes mental health programs, was recently submitted to Congress. A social services block grant bill which consolidates 12 major programs, including the Developmental Disabilities program and Rehabilitation Services, was transmitted to Congress on April 29, 1981. At present, there is no clear timetable for action on these measures. It's possible that Congress will act quickly and that legislation, if adopted, could take effect as early as October 1, 1981 (when the federal government's fiscal year begins). However, the Congress may require more time for deliberation, which would delay action.

The Administration has proposed a 12% rescission for mental health services for FY 1981 and a 25% reduction for FY 1982. For programs in the social services block (this includes Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services), an overall cut in funding of approximately 25% has been proposed for FY 1982, although no rescissions have been requested for most programs in this block for FY 1981. However, a few programs in the rehabilitation services section are scheduled for a proposed rescission of 20%. These include grants for training of professionals, independent living centers and certain special projects focusing on delivery of services to severely disabled and underserved populations. These rescissions, if passed, would go into effect for the duration of the current fiscal year, 1980-81. No rescission has been suggested for the basic state grant for vocational rehabilitation, which provides funds for a wide range of services to enable people with disabilities to become employable.

As we go to press, no final action has been taken on any of the above proposals, rescissions and budget cuts. If you would like additional information or have questions, you can contact the office of your Senator or Congressman.

—Annette Patella

devastating effects of perceiving disabled persons as eternal "patients." The authors point out that in nearly all instances, a person with a disability (whether the disability is obvious or hidden) is seen as incapable of participating in the social interactions and assuming the responsibilities expected of other human beings.

### Society describes disabled people as pathetic victims, not as equals

Gliedman and Roth state: "... *the handicapped person ... is treated with a specifically medical tolerance. Like the victim of acute illness or temporary injury, he is excused from his 'normal' role obligations and expected to fulfill the obligation of the sick role. ... To grow up handicapped in America is to grow up in a society that, because of its misreading of the significance of disability, is never entirely human in the way it treats the person within.*"

Inevitably, being defined as helpless and dependent is reflected in exclusionary patterns that are far more handicapping than the difficulties involved in dealing with the disability itself. The results of negative images shadow disabled people from birth to adulthood—in social relationships, in the job market, in the community. Parents share the stigma. They feel it keenly when a child is taunted on the playground, or given a label that describes his condition in technical terms—but is denied a school program in which he can fully develop his potential.

### How can we root out destructive attitudes?

What kinds of action can help reverse downbeat attitudes and ideas rooted in mythology or prejudice? This year—The International Year of Disabled Persons—is a good time to look at that question, and learn how to answer it. The accompanying article on the International Year tells what people are doing in many different parts of the United States. The subject needs to be explored from many perspectives, bringing together parents and disabled adults with educators, psychologists, experts in communication and other professionals.

Here are some areas that offer potential for bringing about change:

- Working with local newspaper editors, TV and radio station managers, to produce interviews and stories that portray disabled people as *real*: not perfect, not pitiable, not super-achievers, but capable human beings—more *like* other people than different. For example, simply by including a handicapped person on a talk show, discussing his or her field of work, or commenting as a professional on a topic of general concern, it is possible to project that realistic image.
- Encouraging local libraries and bookstores to feature books that talk about disabilities in non-technical terms and tell the life stories of disabled people who have achieved independence and self-pride. Good literature about disabled people does exist; Closer Look publishes reviews of excellent books that can

help change attitudes, but in many areas, it is extremely hard to buy or borrow them.

- Generating experiences that bring non-disabled and disabled people together. As real-life relationships increase (in classrooms, colleges, on jobs), there will be a natural growth of respect and acceptance. Children (both disabled and non-disabled) need opportunities to meet and talk with handicapped adults who are living independently, to ask questions, to talk openly, to overcome ignorance by gaining a sense of what physical or mental differences are all about. Adults need similar experiences. Many disabled people recount times when others fail to make eye contact, or turn away even when a disabled person may clearly need help. Why? Usually, because of a deep sense of embarrassment, a feeling they'll "do the wrong thing," that they don't know how to act around a handicapped person. This discomfort can be overcome—to everyone's benefit.
- Working with civic clubs, professional associations, church groups and other organizations to develop programs that specifically address attitudes toward disabled people. PTA's, Women's Clubs, such groups as Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions' Clubs, youth organizations, Chambers of Commerce, local chapters of school, health and social service professionals—all can come to grips with this issue. Looking at their own membership rolls is a place to start. Do they include disabled members? Discussions with speakers who can tell it like it is, and with parents of handicapped children, can help build a perception of the humanness and true capability of people with disabilities.
- Sharing ideas about good programs. Many people are thinking about how to go about changing attitudes; interesting new approaches are cropping up. Films, books and well-planned activities make it possible to see the world from a disabled person's point of view. A list of such resources follows this article; these can be starting points for community efforts. Closer Look is extremely interested in collecting ideas that work. Tell us about them!

### Adaptations in schools and on jobs create a new atmosphere

It is extremely important to make information about "adaptations" more readily available. Adaptations—ways of changing or modifying the learning or work environment so that a handicapped student or worker can participate—are vital keys to bringing disabled people into the everyday world. But information about adaptations has not been broadly disseminated; even more important, we are far from knowing all we need to know about the kinds of adaptations that work for various disabilities.

Educators and employers, city administrators and recreation directors, housing and transportation providers and post-secondary administrators—all need this information. Adapting environments is closely related to the dynamics of attitude change. Sensible changes create accessibility to schools, colleges, jobs, all aspects of life. As the

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### *Invisible Barrier (continued)*

world becomes more open, so will our minds. By meeting on equal ground, people with and without disabilities can see each other as they really are.

Parents adapt environments for their children all the time. Disabled individuals know what works for them. Practical discoveries are being made every day in classrooms and laboratories and industries about common-sense and inexpensive ways to handle what may seem to be insurmountable barriers. This information needs to be exchanged, dramatized and replicated...based on the affirmative belief that it *can* be done!

**Disabled people belong in the real world—  
as independent adults**

Independent living for people who have mental, physical or emotional handicaps is the culmination of new attitudes which perceive and accept the full humanity of disabled people—with the right to joy and life experiences, self-direction and fulfillment. Bringing about a widespread change in public attitudes demands the highest priority. The International Year of Disabled People offers an excellent opportunity to commit our energies to this goal.

—Barbara Scheiber

### **FOR YOUR FILE OF BOOKS, FILMS AND ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HELP CHANGE ATTITUDES**

As the movement toward full acceptance of people with disabilities has grown, so has the demand for teaching materials that can be used to change attitudes. Parents, professionals and adults with disabilities are increasingly active in sharing what they know—and shared knowledge is a powerful tool. This eagerness to reach out has stimulated a flood of useful films, books and activity guides that can be used to reach and teach the non-disabled population. We have selected a few examples; we encourage you to seek out others to use and share.

#### **FILMS**

These films are available from: Rehabfilm, 20 West 40th Street, New York, New York 10018.

**A DIFFERENT APPROACH.** This delightful and humorous film is useful for high school and adult audiences, especially for anyone concerned with vocational counseling, job training and employment of disabled persons.

**I'M THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE.** A non-technical and realistic review of epilepsy, including the superstitions which continue to make adjustment difficult.

**SHARING THE EXPERIENCE WITH PETER.** A positive and sensitive story about a family which includes an eleven-year-old mentally retarded son, and how they attempt to solve their greatest problem—the attitudes of the community.

The following films must be ordered from the organizations that produced them:

**FEELING FREE.** Scholastic's Feeling Free, 904 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 06732.

Based on the television series of the same name, this series has been edited into fourteen-minute versions for classroom use. Disabled children are shown playing games, enjoying recreational activities, and talking about what it's like to be handicapped.

**PEOPLE FIRST.** Stanfield House, P.O. Box 3208, Santa Monica, California 90403.

A powerful documentary film that expresses the message of real acceptance of human beings with severe disabilities. It tells the story of a conference in Oregon held by people who, until very recently, lived in institutions—and came together to form their own organization: People First.

**WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU MEET A BLIND PERSON?** American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., 15 West Sixteenth Street, New York, New York 10011.

A witty film, that uses a series of awkward encounters between a sighted person and a blind person to make some important comments about attitudes and how lack of information often separates disabled and non-disabled people. It illustrates the importance of their communicating and sharing their common humanity.

#### **BOOKS AND ACTIVITY GUIDES**

##### **THE HIDDEN MINORITY—AMERICA'S HANDICAPPED.**

By Sonny Kleinfeld, Atlantic-Little, Brown Books, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02106 (1979) 213 pp.

The history and impact of the disability movement on the lives of disabled people, and the real obstacles that make full participation in society difficult for disabled individuals.

##### **THE UNEXPECTED MINORITY: HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN AMERICA**

By John Gliedman and William Roth, for the Carnegie Council on Children, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017 (1980) 525 pp.

A fresh look at how the misconceptions about disabled persons stunt the development of maturity and independence, with suggested strategies for change.

##### **BARRIER AWARENESS PROJECT SERIES**

The George Washington University, Barrier Awareness Project, RRRI-ALLB, Suite 704, 1828 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

An outstanding series of booklets addressing attitudes toward specific disabilities. "Beyond the Sound Barrier," about hearing impairment, "Dignity," about mental retardation, and "Free Wheeling," about people who use wheelchairs, are among the titles included. A complete list of publications is available from RRRI-ALLB.

##### **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER**

Closer Look (1981) 8 pp.

An introductory reading list for anyone who is looking for accurate, non-technical information about different handicaps as well as a sense of the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

##### **MAINSTREAMING PRESCHOOLERS**

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1978) 7 volumes. Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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These excellent manuals, developed for Project Head Start, are filled with ideas and resources for parents, teachers and others who work with preschool handicapped children. Each volume covers a specific disability.

#### **A READER'S GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL, PHYSICAL, OR EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES.**

By Coralie B. Moore and Kathryn Gorham Morton, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1979) 144 pp. Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

A comprehensive annotated listing of books to help parents and professionals understand disabilities and work with disabled children. Includes information about disabilities and their effect on families, special education, home teaching, planning for the future—and other topics of vital interest.

#### **EVERYBODY COUNTS! A WORKSHOP MANUAL TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE**

The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091 (1979) 80 pp.

This helpful guide provides the basics needed in planning a workshop, as well as a section on a variety of activities that help sensitize participants to realities of disabilities.

#### **PEOPLE...JUST LIKE YOU**

The Committee on Youth Development, The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Washington, D.C. 20210 (1978) 36 pp.

This manual suggests activities for children from kindergarten through high school age and lists additional resources.

#### **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?**

By Ellen Barnes, Carol Berigan and Douglas Biklen. Human Policy Press, P.O. Box 127, University Press, Syracuse, New York 13210 (1978) 165 pp.

A book of classroom activities that can be used to teach children better understanding of classmates with disabilities; includes suggestions for books, films, helpful organizations and other resources.

### **PROGRAMS**

#### **COUNT ME IN**

The PACER Center, Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights, 4701 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407.

COUNT ME IN teaches children about disabilities and about understanding handicapped children through trained volunteers who present puppet shows about handicaps to preschool and school age children.

#### **KIDS**

Keys to Introducing Disability in Schools, Center for Independent Living, Inc., 2566 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704.

The curriculum, developed by the Center for Independent Living, is designed to teach very young children about disabilities and the people who have them. An inservice teacher training program is also included.—Lois Godboldte

## **Some social tips for non-disabled folks**

How do you give directions to a blind person? How—and when—do you help someone who is physically disabled? Some answers to these and other questions were put together for a faculty handbook by Diane Ramirez of the College of the Desert, Palm Desert, California, where she is Director of Handicapped Programs and Services. These tips were reprinted in "The Special Education Report," a newsletter published by Diversified Learning, Inc.; we would like to pass them along to our readers.

- Converse with a handicapped individual in spirit, content and approach as you would with anyone else.

- When you think someone with a disability may need assistance, ask, "Do you need help? How should I help you?" (Occasionally, well-meaning persons are more of a hindrance than a help because they are unsure of what to do.)

- Do not shout at blind persons. They have lost their *vision*, not their hearing.

- Don't be embarrassed over common expressions that might seem awkward, such as asking a blind person whether she has seen a particular movie. The English language is filled with these expressions, and you are more likely to be sensitive to them than the person with whom you are talking.

- Use graphic language when directing someone who is blind. Don't say, "The library is right over there." Do say, "From where you are standing now, walk straight about 20 paces up a ramp, 20 paces to the building, then two sets of double doors about two paces apart that swing out."

- Do not "talk over" or provide the words for someone who stutters or speaks with difficulty. Be patient and listen, and let the person speak for himself. It is appropriate to repeat the thought back to confirm communication of the idea, but not to out-guess the thoughts and words and assume you know what he is trying to express.

- *Always FACE* a person with a hearing impairment. Be sure the person can see your lips; speak clearly without exaggerating lip movements.

- Speak directly to a disabled person. Do not direct conversation to an attendant, assistant or nearby companion as if she did not exist.

- Do not call special attention to a disabled person. Approach her as another person who happens to have a handicap—not as a handicap who belongs to a person.

- When you attempt to help a disabled person, consider first: Who am I helping? If the answer is *yourself*, then you are doing no one any favors. If the answer is clearly the disabled person, then participate *with* him; don't do things *to*, *at* or *for* him.

## **Spanish Harlem Projects Helps Families "Put the Pieces Together"**

"It's a godsend!"

That's the way the families of Spanish Harlem, in New York City, describe a remarkable project—the Community Service Society (CSS) Direction Service. The story of Señora S., an Hispanic mother of four children, two of whom require special education, illustrates the reason for their enthusiasm.

One morning, Señora S. left her children in the care of a neighbor and returned home later in the day to find that a social service agency had forcibly removed them to a foster home. Angry, afraid and not knowing what to do, she followed the advice of a friend and visited the Direction Service.

A staff member greeted her in Spanish, and she immediately felt more relaxed; here was someone who would understand her! She poured her heart out. In addition to the immediate problem of retrieving her children, Señora S. was facing eviction by the landlord, was suffering severe depression as a result of frequent beatings and abuse by her husband, and was very concerned about the educational needs of her two handicapped youngsters, a son who is almost blind and a daughter with severe speech problems.

Over a period of eight months, the staff at the CSS Direction Service was able to help Señora S. resolve her most pressing needs: the children were legally returned to her and placed in appropriate educational programs, the eviction notices were cancelled and her husband moved out.

The CSS Direction Service has been in operation since 1977 and is one of 12 Direction Service programs nationwide funded by the U.S. Department of Education. *REPORT from CLOSER LOOK* recently interviewed Richard Lash, the founder and director of CSS Direction Service, to learn more about this innovative project.

**Q. What is the concept underlying the Direction Service programs?**

**A.** Direction Service was set up to help families with handicapped children find their way through the maze of the service system. It provides a free, one-stop service to review the *total* needs of the child and family and matches these needs to available resources in the community.

Direction Service does not provide a direct service, such as diagnosis, treatment or classroom instruction, but acts as a "broker," linking services from existing agencies to a family's needs. Follow-along is provided to ensure that the family and child's immediate needs, as well as changing future needs, are met.

Demonstration Direction Service projects extend from the rural Pacific Northwest and the Dakota Black Hills to the streets of Harlem. Populations served vary in size and range from upper middle class to minority families living at the poverty level. Although each project utilizes different approaches in meeting the needs of its population, all provide information and referral, case management or the matching of needs to services, follow-along and parent involvement. In essence, Direction Service "puts the

pieces together" for the family and child with special needs.

**Q. Would you describe the CSS Direction Service and how it is staffed?**

**A.** The CSS Direction Service is located in a public school in Spanish Harlem on the Upper West Side of New York City. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is sponsored by the Community Service Society, a non-profit agency which has been serving poor families in New York City since 1848.

The staff is small—seven full-time people. All are bicultural and bilingual in Spanish. We all have a lot of experience working with inner city poor people. Some of the staff come from the neighborhood served by the project. The efforts of the permanent staff are supplemented by volunteers from the community, college students and employees provided with funds under the Older Americans Act.

**Q. What type of population is served?**

**A.** Our population is approximately 85% Hispanic and 15% Black. There is also a small percentage of Haitian and White families in the community. More than half of the families don't speak English and many are illiterate in Spanish. Over 70% of the families are single-parent, female-headed households, and many have more than one handicapped child.

The demonstration area that we serve includes a small percentage of upper and middle class families in addition to the more numerous poverty-stricken families. More affluent parents usually are in need only of information and referral and in most cases are able to act as their own case managers.

**Q. How do families find out about the CSS Direction Service?**

**A.** Families are referred to us by school personnel, social service agencies, and the local Committee on the Handicapped and by other families. An informal network exists in this community and is instrumental in giving our service high visibility. Residents know one another and are in contact daily. The walk to the neighborhood bodegas (stores), laundromats and check-cashing storefronts is an opportunity to exchange news.

We keep in close touch with an independent community worker who brings soup and spaghetti to poor families twice a week. He knows the people and their problems and is a "big brother" to many of the children. Very often we hear about crisis situations from him. He brought us the news that Señora M., who is disabled, and was in despair over her living conditions and the institutionalization of her mentally retarded hyperactive daughter, had attempted suicide and was in critical condition in the hospital. We were able to help with resolving the immediate crisis, and are now helping her with some of the underlying problems.

Since most of our families do not have telephones, we often have to rely on this neighborhood network for information and to relay messages. In addition, our staff

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### Spanish Harlem (continued)

frequently makes home visits to confirm appointments and check on how a family is doing.

#### **Q. What are some of the special needs of the families?**

**A.** Most of the families who come to us are receiving public assistance and are preoccupied with basic survival needs. Food, clothing and housing are the immediate concerns. A mother worried about rats in the apartment and the lack of heat and hot water cannot devote her attention to the development of her handicapped child's school program. These families don't know where to turn for help. They don't know what services exist, let alone how to get them.

Very often clients come to us in a crisis situation: the family has been burned out of their apartment, evicted, faces sudden loss of all income, or, as in the case of Señora S., the children have been forcibly removed to a foster home. Basic human needs have to be satisfied and crises resolved before we can discuss appropriate educational placement.

For example, one mother, Señora R., came to us when her welfare checks stopped suddenly. She and her two children were living in an abandoned building that had no heat or electricity. A member of the project staff investigated and found that Señora R. had failed to return a lengthy recertification questionnaire which she did not understand. We helped her straighten out the welfare tangle, find a new apartment, and then proceeded to look into evaluation and placement for her seven-year-old son who has Down's syndrome.

New York City poses some unique problems for these families. Many of them are from rural areas and are overwhelmed by the fast pace of the city and the complexity of the bureaucracy. They are dependent on public transportation but don't understand how to use the system; many are afraid to go underground to use the subways. And of course, the language barrier can be very isolating. Families like these literally need to be taken to appointments. The CSS Direction Service must often provide escorts to appointments as well as a translator who understands the system and can explain the meaning of things, in addition to translating into Spanish.

#### **Q. Is the CSS Direction Service able to provide financial aid to families in crisis?**

**A.** Under our contract with the Department of Education, we don't have funds for direct financial aid. However, we can often obtain emergency financial help for a family from our sponsoring agency, CSS. Without such funds, Señora H. and her four children, three of whom have physical and mental handicaps, might have starved as they waited for their application for public assistance to be processed.

Since its inception, the CSS Direction Service has worked hard to establish close ties with a variety of resources, both public and private. No stone is left unturned in our search for every available means to assist families in need.

#### **Q. Is there much parent involvement in the project?**

**A.** I'm glad you asked that question. The population we're working with has traditionally been considered disinterested and unresponsive. Our experience has been just the opposite!

A parent group meets regularly to exchange experiences with staff and other parents. Group sessions have included role playing activities in which staff assume the parent role and parents become staff or agency administrators. We've learned a lot from these sessions about parents' perceptions of how our operation is managed. The role plays have helped parents become more assertive and have developed skills useful in obtaining results from the service system.

Special sessions to teach "survival communication" in English as a second language were requested by parents who voiced their frustration with having to communicate through translators. The project staff recruited volunteer teachers, and the New York City Board of Education provided training and materials.

These families have historically had difficulty gaining access to the service system. They may be suspicious of the system and those who represent it. Creating a bond of trust with a parent who comes to us is a key element in the Direction Service process. Once that bond is established, we have found the parents are usually anxious to work with us and assume more responsibility for their lives.

You can't imagine how exciting it is to see parents become progressively more able to cope independently. Initially, staff members arrange services *for* a parent. Gradually, services can be arranged *with* the parent. It's wonderful when a parent reaches the point where she can arrange for services on her own and go on to help other parents.

#### **Q. What does the future look like for Direction Service?**

**A.** Direction Service cannot realistically expect that the federal government will continue its support indefinitely. The seed money provided by the Department of Education created demonstration projects across the country that assist families with handicapped children in obtaining needed services. The time is coming for public agencies and private organizations to assume responsibility for the funding and operation of the existing Direction Service models and to create new projects.

The CSS Direction Service provided technical assistance and was instrumental in the creation of 19 Early Childhood Direction Services throughout New York State funded by the State Education Department. This is just the beginning. The network needs to grow and expand nationwide.

#### **Q. Would you say that the CSS Direction Service is a success?**

**A.** Success is a relative thing. Complicated problems don't just end when public assistance checks start arriving or when children have been evaluated and placed. As time passes, families enter new situations and may require some additional help or guidance. Direction Service is an ongoing process.

In spite of all their problems, the families we serve are generally close-knit and caring. By helping them cope, the CSS Direction Service has enabled many families to stay together and has saved many children from being raised in cold, institutional settings. Success? I'd rather just say that we've been able to help a lot of very needy people.

—Annette Patella

## Handicapped Teens Study Sea Life

"A handicapped person can aspire to a career in science despite his physical limitations. In fact, scientific research demands patience and perseverance, traits that are well-developed in many handicapped individuals."

A man who firmly believes in that philosophy has turned it into an exciting reality. Dr. Edward C. Keller, a biology professor at West Virginia University, founded and directs the Marine Science Program for the Handicapped. This is a five-week summer course for eleventh and twelfth-grade handicapped students with a talent for science. Each summer since 1977, students have traveled from all over the country to the Marine Science Consortium's Wallops Island Station, near Assateague Island National Seashore Park in Virginia, to take part in this course.

### "Hands-on" study includes everyone

Blind, deaf and physically handicapped teens live in the Wallops Island dormitories and spend their days studying marine biology, navigation, coastal ecology and oceanography. Although there is classroom work in this demanding curriculum, it is far from being classroom-bound. Individual attention, tactile aids and relief maps, signing and an occasional push to get a wheelchair through deep sand make it possible for every student to study the complexities of the seashore world at first hand. As a part of the study course, each student selects a research experiment to carry out and report on.

### You Can!

An award-winning movie about the program, "You Can," shows vividly the thought and planning that make the program come alive for teens who participate. They work hard—but they have fun, too, and while they are having fun they learn about each other. Special com-

munication skills such as braille or signing are shared with the whole group. When half-a-dozen kids link arms and go treasure hunting, needing each one's special ability to complete the hunt successfully, they learn to value themselves and others for what they are and what they can do. Dr. Keller, who had polio in 1952, believes from personal experience in the importance of learning this lesson.

The program is funded by the National Science Foundation. Students must pay their own transportation to and from Wallops Island. Room and board for the five weeks is \$550 plus a \$30 station fee. Some scholarship funds have been made available from the National Science Foundation for qualified students who would not otherwise be able to take part.

### Applications must come in soon

Dates for the 1981 course run from July 1 to August 5, and students with all types and degrees of physical disability will be considered. Write for applications to: Dr. Edward C. Keller, 237 Brooks Hall, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506. Deadline for receiving applications is May 15.

Because of cutbacks in funding, 1981 may be the last year for this innovative program. Whether or not it is possible to continue, it has already opened the door to scientific study for many capable and determined students who might have been excluded from regular science courses in school. The film, "You Can," is an eloquent statement of the value of Dr. Keller's program.

Note: "You Can" may be borrowed without cost by writing to: Motion Picture Service, NOAA-PA, Rockwell Building, Room 039, 11400 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

—Marie Ormsby

### Now—Hear Us on Tape

Our newsletter is now being recorded on cassette tapes by the District of Columbia Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Washington, D.C. The Library of Congress, in cooperation with a network of regional and subregional libraries in each state, provides a free service to people who are unable to read or use standard printed materials because of visual or physical limitations. To be eligible, you must be certified by a competent authority as being partially or totally blind, or having a physical limitation that prevents you from reading standard books. Dyslexic children and adults can enroll, too, with appropriate certification.

You can borrow cassette tapes of our newsletter by contacting your Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Your local public library can put you in touch with the nearest Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

### ONE STEP AT A TIME

"One Step At A Time," one of Closer Look's most popular booklets, is now available in a revised, updated edition. Written by Barbara Scheiber for parents of preschool children with disabilities or delays in development, it is full of practical advice on steps to take to help a child grow and develop.

Recognizing possible developmental problems, finding diagnosis, working with your child at home, early education programs—and many other topics—are covered in this helpful and encouraging publication. It suggests community resources, books and activity guides, and includes a comprehensive listing of national parent groups and disability-related organizations that parents and professionals will want to use as resources.

Since its original publication, "One Step At A Time" has helped countless parents; it has been requested by thousands of professionals to use in their work with parents of young handicapped children. The booklet may be obtained by writing to Closer Look, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.



## Parents and Educators “Walk in Each Other’s Shoes”

There’s no question about the value of strong working partnerships between parents and professionals. The better their exchange of ideas and concerns, the more effective activities on behalf of handicapped children will be. But often, something gets in the way. Communication gets stalled. Why? What goes wrong? What can be done about it?

To seek answers to these questions, Closer Look joined with The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in November, 1980 to produce a unique workshop, *Enhancing Relationships: Parents and Professionals Together*. Every phase of the activity, from the first steps to the final action plans, was carried out with parents and educators sharing equally in tasks and responsibilities.

### Parents, educators join in making arrangements

The workshop took place in Georgetown, Delaware, where special educators representing the Delaware Foundation (CEC) teamed up with parents of handicapped children to work on recruitment, site selection and other arrangements. Mary Lowry and Barbara Scheiber of Closer Look and CEC’s Susan Gorin and Jean Nazzaro jointly developed the curriculum for the workshop and worked closely with the local planning team.

The format of the workshop encouraged a lively and candid discussion of barriers to communication that can be overcome—once they are identified and people start to walk in each other’s shoes. Parents and educators found that they shared common concerns, goals and commitment. At the end of the highly successful session, participants made plans to continue to build effective teamwork—and decided to work together to produce a second Delaware workshop to reach an even wider group.

### Workshop manual on team-building coming soon

From the outset, we saw the activity as a testing ground for similar workshops. We hoped that the ideas tried out in Delaware would stimulate efforts by parents and educators in other parts of the country. The success of the day proved how valuable this type of exchange can be, and a manual is now being developed for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children which will make replication possible.

The manual will provide simple, clear directions for any group of parents and educators to follow and adapt in conducting a similar team-building workshop. If you would like a copy, write to ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. Enclose \$1.00 for postage and handling with your request.

## Closer Look, HEATH Join to Create Post-Secondary Information Center

A new project has started which expands the scope of information offered by Closer Look by furnishing information on post-secondary education opportunities for people with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. (This program does not replace Closer Look, but adds to our regular service. We’ll go right on providing parents, professionals and advocates with information about services for handicapped children and youth.)

The project—the HEATH/Closer Look Resource Center—is a combined effort of Project HEATH (Higher Education and the Handicapped) and Closer Look, and is funded under a contract with the Department of Education.

### Center will respond to consumers and professionals

The primary goal of the new center is to offer disabled consumers, as well as professionals in the field of post-secondary education, information about resources that will help disabled students gain access to the education programs and services available beyond high school. This includes a variety of opportunities, such as colleges, universities, vocational technical schools, adult education programs, sheltered workshops.

All students are faced with difficult questions after their high school years. For a person who is handicapped, decisions about the future may be complicated by such concerns as the need for accessibility, financial aid, curricular modifications or overcoming attitudinal barriers. But information about support systems for disabled youth and adults has been limited and locating resources has been difficult.

### Cooperative effort will strengthen resources for disabled adults

The HEATH/Closer Look Resource Center helps to bridge this information gap. Project HEATH, coordinated by the American Council on Education has, in the past, provided information to higher education administrators and personnel to assist them in finding ways to serve handicapped students on college campuses. The activities of our two centers are complementary; cooperation will increase effectiveness in opening opportunities for handicapped adults. Rhona Hartman, from project HEATH, is the center’s Director and Susan Sorrells of Closer Look is Resource Coordinator for the project.

### Newsletter reports on programs, publications

The new project produces a quarterly newsletter, “Information from HEATH/Closer Look” (available free by request). It discusses new publications, highlights various post-secondary programs, examines new or pending legislation and shares some questions and answers.

Please write if you feel we can be of assistance to you or others with whom you are concerned. We may not have all of the answers now, but your questions will help us to determine needs and to find solutions. The address: **HEATH/Closer Look, Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013**

*IYDP (continued from page 1)*

the community has focused its plan on unmet needs, it is formally designated by the Council as a Community Partner and issued a certificate of recognition.

The U.S. Council for IYDP coordinates activities for the year from its offices in Washington, D.C. In addition to liaison persons in each state and territory, there are over 1600 communities that have liaisons and are becoming active in making this a meaningful year. A great many organizations are involved; in addition to the support of disability-related organizations, some of America's largest corporations are partners and have contributed substantially to helping IYDP succeed.

#### **Projects can have lasting benefits**

The activities and projects coming out of IYDP will have echoes for years to come. Many local projects reflect the long-felt needs of citizens with disabilities, who have strong representation on IYDP committees. Again and again, this international year is stimulating programs that meet critical needs and assert the dignity of handicapped individuals.

#### **Attitudes come first**

In talking with the dedicated and imaginative people who are making these projects happen, we often hear the urgency of the need to change attitudes. As one community liaison person expressed it, "You can cut all the curbs you want to, and ramp everything—but until people's attitudes change, it isn't going to open up any opportunities for handicapped people."

He is not alone in his feeling, and many projects reflect that. One popular and effective approach to opening up attitudes is to begin with children and entertain them. The message—that disabled people are not so different after all—is often given through the means of puppets. Both children and adults can respond to puppets spontaneously and without feeling threatened.

#### **Puppets and basketball become learning tools**

One set of puppets being used is "Far-Out Fred and His Friends," the creation of the Reverend Leon Pomeroy of Big Sandy, Montana. His hand puppets deliver a message of caring—that people who care make the difference. In this small community, the one hundred fifty children in the elementary school applauded as the puppets built a ramp so that Far-Out Fred could wheel out of his house in his wheelchair to join them. The puppet troupe will be traveling to other schools in the area, too, to tell their story.

Another project in that community was reported by Connie Green, Director of Big Sandy Activities, Inc., a center for developmentally disabled adults. The center fielded a basketball team for the Special Olympics that had some unusual coaches—the members of the Big Sandy High School basketball team. Twice a week for two months, team members gave up their study periods to coach the adults, aged 32 to 60, in basketball skills. Everybody had a wonderful time—and the activity center team proudly displayed its new skills in the Special Olympics.

#### **"Flagship Communities" represent many settings**

Big cities as well as small towns are partners in this massive national effort. Boston is one of fifty "flagship communities." Flagship communities represent urban, ru-

ral, and suburban settings, and a variety of income levels. One of the purposes of the flagship concept is to develop and publicize programs that can be used elsewhere.

Roger Chiccese, IYDP liaison person and Director of Boston's Mayor's Committee on the Handicapped, stressed his committee's efforts to create low or no-cost programs. He explained that the city's active, dedicated committee has a substantial representation from business and industry and from communications media, and that half of the committee members are people with disabilities. They have divided their efforts into four areas: employment, cultural and leisure activities, public awareness and special needs information.

Chiccese is especially enthusiastic about the possibility that Boston's planned Awareness Week may coincide with the timing of the national conference of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, June 6-9. He has worked with AIRS to make the conference accessible to people with all disabilities, as well as to assist in making local information and referral services aware of the need for specialized information about community services for disabled children and adults.

#### **Projects show imagination, reflect local needs**

There are hundreds of communities that are getting into the spirit and thousands of projects that deserve mention.

- **The Parkersburg, West Virginia** committee is working with the public school system to build awareness into the school curriculum as a permanent theme. Jane Burdette, Parkersburg's IYDP liaison, commented that the program must be working—her young son's friend invited her one day to "come on over to the school anytime and show them your wheelchair. I told the teacher you have one."
- **Saginaw, Michigan** will have a published survey of accessible doctors' and dentists' offices as a result of their committee's work.
- **Nashville, Tennessee** plans an arts festival and a job fair.
- **Virginia Beach, Virginia** is offering technical assistance to local churches to make them barrier-free.
- **Kokomo, Indiana's** Sears, Roebuck store is now a model of accessibility for shoppers, thanks to timely suggestions made in advance of a planned remodeling job.
- In **Cedar Rapids, Iowa**, Ms. Wheelchair, Iowa, Jhenecia Smith, will do a four-day series of presentations about disabilities in the city's schools.
- **Porterville, California** is working on a nationwide survey of handicapped parking codes, hoping to spur a movement toward standardization.
- **Los Angeles** has developed a fire safety program that responds to the needs of citizens with physical, sight, hearing and communication disabilities.

If you would like to help make your community's effort more successful, or if your community is not already actively involved, you may write for more information to: U.S. Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1575 I Street, N.W., Fourth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005—or get in touch with your state liaison person. A list of all state liaisons is on page 11.

—Marie Ormsby

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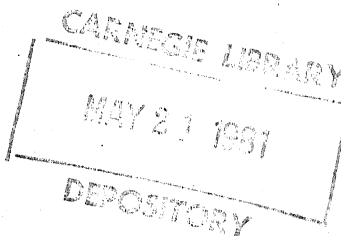
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